

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-14 (canceled)

Claim 15 (previously presented): A method for processing a food product comprising transporting said food product through a plurality of stations including a pasteurization station, pasteurizing the surface of said food product at said pasteurization station by applying a pasteurizing medium to said food product at said pasteurization station and
5 convectively transferring heat from said pasteurizing medium to the surface of said food product at a sufficiently high heat transfer rate such that the surface heat transfer coefficient becomes sufficiently higher than the food product conductance coefficient that the surface temperature is substantially instantaneously elevated above temperatures which are instantly lethal to microbes which may be present, and comprising applying said pasteurizing medium
10 to said surface of said food product with directional jets, and directing said pasteurizing medium at high enough velocity to physically displace said food product and apply said pasteurizing medium to the entire outer surface of said food product.

Claims 16-20 (canceled)

Claim 21 (previously presented): A method for processing a food product comprising transporting said food product through a plurality of stations including a loading station, a pasteurization station, and a closing station, said loading station loading said food product in a package, said pasteurization station pasteurizing the surface of said food product after said
5 loading station, said closing station closing said package with said food product therein after said pasteurization station, and comprising pasteurizing said food product at said pasteurization station with a pasteurizing medium, and directing said pasteurizing medium at

said food product at high velocity to physically displace said food product from said package and apply said pasteurizing medium to the entire outer surface of said food product.

Claims 22-24 (canceled)

Claim 25 (previously presented): A method for processing a food product comprising transporting said food product through a plurality of stations including a loading station, a pasteurization station, and a closing station, said loading station loading said food product in a package, said pasteurization station pasteurizing the surface of said food product after said
5 loading station, said closing station closing said package with said food product therein after said pasteurization station, and comprising providing said pasteurization station with a chamber having first, second and third ports, and comprising providing a first flush mode introducing pasteurizing medium at said first port and venting said pasteurizing medium at
10 at least one of said second and third ports, providing a second flush mode introducing pasteurizing medium at said second port and venting said pasteurizing medium at at least one of said first and third ports, and providing a third flush mode introducing pasteurizing medium at both of said first and second ports and venting said pasteurizing medium at said third port.

Claim 26 (original): The method according to claim 25 comprising providing said third port between said first and second ports, and

during said first flush mode, flowing said pasteurizing medium in a first direction across said food product,

5 during said second flush mode, flowing said pasteurizing medium across said food product in a second direction opposite to said first direction, and

during said third flush mode, flowing said pasteurizing medium in each of said first and second directions to said third port.

Claim 27 (original): The method of according to claim 25 comprising providing said third port between said first and second ports, and

during said first flush mode, flowing said pasteurizing medium in a first direction across said food product,

5 during said second flush mode, flowing said pasteurizing medium across said food product in a second direction opposite to said first direction, and

during said third flush mode, flowing said pasteurizing medium in each of said first and second directions from said third port.

Claims 28-63 (canceled)